

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

*[Handwritten mark]*  
INFORMATION  
July 13, 1970

CONFIDENTIAL/EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky *[Handwritten mark]*

SUBJECT: Culebra

I enclose a memo of conversation with two lawyers on the Culebra case. Note that they allege Bryce Harlow is involved.

NAVY, FBI reviews completed.

STATE review complete

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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July 10, 1970

4:30 PM

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Richard Copaken, Covington & Burling  
Tom Jones, Covington & Burling  
Viron P. Vaky, NSC

SUBJECT: Culebra

Mr. Copaken asked what my "investigations" had revealed. I said that I did not want him to labor under any misunderstanding. I was not investigating anything. I had passed on the allegations he had given me last week to persons who should have that information. I had no operational responsibility for the Culebra matter.

I added that from all I had been able to gather from talking to people who should know, I had found absolutely nothing to confirm the allegations. I added that Dr. Kissinger knew nothing of the matter and had not been briefed on Culebra. The NSC Staff had no operational responsibility in this matter.

Copaken said that the information that Kissinger knew nothing of the matter did not square with their information. He asked if there was any reason for Kissinger to be less than candid with me. I replied that I did not think so.

Copaken then said he wanted to give me information in a longer time-frame, because this was relevant. He then proceeded with an historical account, the main points of which were the following:

Munoz Marin was the father of the Commonwealth concept for Puerto Rico and his idea was to develop it over time and "perfect" it; this would be far more in the interest of the US than independence or statehood. His principal lieutenants during his 15 odd years as governor were Roberto Sanchez and (fnu) Negron. Sanchez spent most of his time in Washington in liaison with the USG. Over time Sanchez became a close friend of Abe Fortas, who was the Commonwealth's attorney here.

During the Dominican crisis CIA operated out of Puerto Rico and used Fortas' link with Sanchez to get Munoz Marin's acquiescence. The CIA agent in Puerto Rico was a Sacha Boldman or Goldman. This was the same agent who had channeled CIA assistance to a school in Costa Rica for Latin American political leaders.

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Sanchez became Governor in 1964. Personal scandal--divorce and re-marriage to his secretary with whom he had been having an open affair--affected his candidacy for reelection. Negron became a rival candidate and Munoz Marin advocated unity of the party behind Negron. However, Sanchez insisted on being a candidate, and both he and Negron became candidates for the 1968 election, thus splitting their party.

At this point, Sanchez obtained USG support through Fortas. CIA/AID/Navy aid was given to his campaign. There were disruptive actions directed against Negron. According to the theory, Negron's essential conservatism would have wrecked the Commonwealth and created severe problems; hence USG support for Sanchez.

When, however, it became evident that Sanchez could not defeat Negron, support was switched to Ferre as the lesser of two evils. CIA/FBI and particularly US Navy support was given to Ferre, and he won. This gave the Navy a hold over Ferre.

Ferre, according to Copaken, contributed heavily to President Nixon's campaign and is on close political terms with him. Given this fact, plus the Navy's hold, the Navy believes it will have its way on Culebra. The result is a surface duplicity, while they work out a deal underneath.

Ferre's family leases the only drydock facilities in San Juan from the US Navy; he has copper interests on the island. By cooperating with the US Navy he obtained USG support in a host of similar matters, or vice versa; his cooperation with the US Navy may have been secured by trading for things he wanted from the USG in other things.

Copagen alleged that there is close cooperation with the "White House" certainly at the political level. Bryce Harlow went to Puerto Rico for July 4th celebrations, but one of the things he went down for was Culebra (precisely what Harlow was to do about Culebra, Copaken refused to say).

I repeated to them after hearing this long exposition, that I had never heard of any of these things and did not know of anything personally which would corroborate the sinister picture they were painting. They asked me to pass the information on; I said I would do so and repeated that the NSC staff had no operational responsibility in the matter.

They asked to whom else they might present their information, since they were concerned to avoid damage to the US image and the Government. I suggested the Secretary of the Navy or the Secretary of Defense, since this was where the decision now rested, as I understood it.

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end.